

Save Energy and Money

How to Implement an ENERGY STAR[®] Office Program

Energy-efficient office equipment and simple energy management practices can significantly trim your organization's utility bills, improve your bottom line, and help the environment.



Why Is Office Energy Efficiency Important?

Implementing an energy efficiency program can yield high economic and environmental returns. For example, a 1997-1998 study of office equipment energy use in the City of San Francisco identified potential energy savings from implementing an energy efficiency program at about \$300,000 per year.

A simple energy efficiency practice can make a substantial environmental impact. If everyone in the United States were to turn off their office equipment at night, the nation could close eight large power stations and prevent 7 million tons of carbon dioxide pollution every year, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

How Does ENERGY STAR®-Labeled Office Equipment Help Save Energy?

The ENERGY STAR Office Equipment Program was created in 1992 by the U.S. EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to increase the energy efficiency of common office equipment. Many computers, monitors, copiers, fax machines and other devices on the market are ENERGY STAR-compliant.

ENERGY STAR-labeled equipment is designed with automatic power management features, whereby an unattended machine will reduce its power or even turn itself off, after a period of inactivity. ENERGY STAR-labeled equipment can save as much as 75 percent of total electricity use, depending on the type of device and usage patterns, according to EPA. This creates an opportunity for substantial operating cost savings and pollution prevention.

Implementing an Energy Efficiency Program – A Four Step Process

Implementing an energy efficiency program can be inexpensive and easily manageable. By following four basic steps, your organization can reduce plug load device electricity use (devices plugged into wall outlets).

The four steps include:

1. Establishing energy efficiency policies.
2. Buying energy-efficient ENERGY STAR-labeled office equipment.
3. Educating employees to modify practices.
4. Enabling power management features.

Establish

Establishing Energy Efficiency Policies

Effective policy starts with a commitment from management. Energy efficiency must be enacted at the highest level possible, so there is no question of management support.

Purchasing Policy

An energy efficiency purchasing policy should mandate that all new office equipment purchases comply with ENERGY STAR energy efficiency specifications.

To ensure the effectiveness of a purchasing policy, follow these guidelines:

- The ENERGY STAR program requires manufacturers to ship equipment with power management features enabled on delivery. Clearly state this requirement in RFPs and similar documents.
- Make sure staff are using power management features.
- Distribute copies of the adopted policy statements to all staff working in purchasing, contracting, or leasing.
- Arrange for purchasing staff to receive training in ENERGY STAR purchasing.
- Prepare materials to assist contract vendors with compliance, and for vendors to disseminate back to departmental contacts.
- Spot-check purchasing policy implementation.

Staff Policy

Establishing an energy efficiency policy requires employees to take specific actions in the workplace to reduce electricity use. The policy should encourage 1) all employees to turn off their machines at the end of the day, and 2) ensure technical staff enables and maintains power management features on office equipment, unless the features interfere with the functioning of the equipment.

For sample energy efficiency policy language, visit the ENERGY STAR Web site at www.epa.gov/office.

Once staff policy has been enacted, the following actions can aid compliance:

- Distributing a copy of the staff policy to all employees.
- Conducting staff outreach to increase awareness of energy efficiency behaviors (see **Modifying Employee Practices** section).
- Spot-checking staff policy implementation.

Educate

Modifying Employee Practices

Modifying employee behavior involves educating staff so they understand the ENERGY STAR energy efficiency message and do their part to reduce operating costs, like turning off their machines when they leave the office. Technical staff can support this behavior by maintaining power management features on office equipment.

The key to modifying employee practices is developing a direct, action-oriented energy efficiency message and communicating this message with staff frequently through different media.

The following are some communication methods for conveying your energy efficiency message to staff:

- **E-mails/Voicemails.** Send e-mail or voicemail messages to each employee reminding them of the financial and environmental benefits of their ENERGY STAR-labeled equipment, and that they should turn off their office equipment at the end of the day. These messages should not be sent so often as to be annoying, but several messages throughout the year can make an impact.
- **Posters/Flyers.** Create and distribute a series of posters or flyers, and place them prominently on bulletin boards, break rooms/kitchens, or above copy machines. Colorful designs are eye catching, and simple messages can reinforce the content of e-mail /voicemail messages. Similarly, notes distributed with employee paychecks also can be effective.
- **Newsletters/Intranet Web sites.** Writing articles in your organization's newsletter or Intranet Web site about ENERGY STAR-labeled equipment features, organizational energy efficiency efforts, and the economic and environmental benefits can encourage participation.
- **Staff Meeting Presentations.** These are most successful when added to a regular meeting. This forum allows you to tailor ENERGY STAR messages, answer questions on the spot, and allows the group's

Buy

Buying Energy-Efficient ENERGY STAR-Labeled Office Equipment

Once your organization has enacted a purchasing policy, all new office equipment purchases should be ENERGY STAR-compliant. To identify compliant equipment, look for the ENERGY STAR label. If you do not see the label, ask for it. Procurement officials can ask their vendors, integrators, or resellers for ENERGY STAR-compliant office equipment.

For more information on purchasing ENERGY STAR-labeled office equipment, visit the ENERGY STAR Web site at www.epa.gov/office or call the ENERGY STAR Hotline at 1-888-STAR-YES (1-888-782-7937). More than 3,300 different types of energy-efficient office equipment are featured on the ENERGY STAR Web site.

manager to voice support, and personalize the message.

- **User Training.** A training session for users covers detailed aspects of ENERGY STAR power management, including why to use it and how to configure machines.
- **Direct Configuration.** In the course of direct equipment configuration, those who perform these operations also can explain it to users—This one-on-one contact is particularly effective.

A variety of these tools are posted on the ENERGY STAR Web site at www.epa.gov/office.

Enable

Enabling Power Management Features

Office equipment power management features must be enabled to ensure maximum operating cost savings. It is important to educate technical staff about power management so they understand these features and their performance, including: the various systems affected, configuration details, troubleshooting, and common problems. Training sessions are an effective method to educate technical staff.

The following essential implementation elements should be reinforced with technical staff:

- Routine checking and configuration of power management adds little time to staff machine installation or maintenance.
- Power management configuration always should be checked on a new machine.
- Computer monitor power management will not interfere with computer function. If it is necessary to disable computer power management features, it is important to maintain monitor power management.
- Management policy supports power management and equipment turn-off (see **Establishing Energy Efficiency Policies** section).

More detailed information is available on the ENERGY STAR Web site at www.epa.gov/office and through the ENERGY STAR Hotline at 1-888-STAR-YES (1-888-782-7937), should your technical staff have concerns.

Technical staff can adjust power management features to suit your organization's needs. The best time setting to maximize energy savings and minimize delays depends on personal preference. Generally, EPA recommends that equipment enters a low-power state after 15 to 30 minutes of inactivity. Most machines take only a few seconds to resume from a power-managed state.

If power management features have been disabled on a large percentage of equipment, equipment evaluation and systematic reconfiguration can be done during or after business hours. During business hours, the person performing the task will interrupt users, but will gain the opportunity to educate them first-hand. After hours, reconfiguration can be done in less time per computer.

Getting Started

To implement an energy efficiency program in your organization, start by reviewing helpful materials and tools developed by EPA. Check out sample tools and materials, and download your copy of the San Francisco Bureau of Energy Conservation study by visiting the ENERGY STAR Web site at www.epa.gov/office.

